

U.S. Department of State

Guide to the
Foreign Service Officer
Selection Process

2007-2008



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Privacy Act Statement

Authority: Section 301 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, 22 U.S.C. s3941.

Purpose: Information is being collected on this form to determine your eligibility to take the Foreign Service Officer Test, to register you for the Foreign Service Officer Test, to assess your qualifications for selection as a Foreign Service Officer, and to ensure the integrity of the examination process.

Routine Uses: The information on this form may be used to prepare statistical reports and analyses at the Department of State. Such reports and analyses are prepared in such a way that data is not identifiable with an individual, and may be shared outside the Department of State. This information may also be made available to other federal agencies in response to a request for information about hiring or retention of an employee, or to Members of Congress in response to an inquiry on behalf of the applicant.

Your Social Security number is used as your applicant identification number. Executive Order 9397 authorizes solicitation of your Social Security number for use as an identifier in personnel records management, thus ensuring proper identification of candidates throughout the selection and employment process. Furnishing your Social Security number, as well as other information requested on the form, is voluntary, but failure to do so may prevent timely processing of your application or may prevent us from registering you for the Foreign Service Officer Test.

Paperwork Reduction Act

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average three hours per response, including time required for searching existing data sources, gathering the necessary documentation, providing the information and/or documents required, and reviewing the final collection. You do not have to supply this information unless this collection displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. If you have comments on the accuracy of this burden estimate and/or recommendations for reducing it, please send them to: U.S. Department of State, A/ISS/DIR, 1800 G St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20520.

Registering for the Test

All registrations for the Foreign Service Officer Test must be completed online. The registration package consists of two parts: the Application Form that gathers factual information about your academic background, work history, and other relevant data, and a Personal Narrative that provides information about your experiences and qualifications to become a Foreign Service Officer. The link to online registration will be available at careers.state.gov in July 2007. The registration process begins the process for entry-level Foreign Service Officer positions in the U.S. Department of State.

For each Foreign Service Officer Test window, registration package must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the opening of the window.

Test windows will occur in September and December 2007 and March, June, August and November 2008.

For exact dates of each test window, visit our website:
careers.state.gov

To obtain additional 2007-2008 Guide to the Foreign Service Officer Selection Process, write:

Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT)
U.S. Department of State
Examination Division
2401 E Street, NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20522-0151

The guide may also be downloaded at our website, careers.state.gov.
As all registrations for the test must now be completed online, there is no longer a printed version of the application in this publication.

Important Information:

- (1) Registration for the Foreign Service Officer Test will be open on a continuous basis.**
- (2) The Foreign Service Officer Test will be offered quarterly in 2007 and 2008 during eight-day test windows.**

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The Department of State is committed to equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disabling condition, sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, or prior statutory, constitutionally protected activity. The Department provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities. Applicants requiring a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or hiring process should so advise the Department. All decisions for granting reasonable accommodation are made on a case-by-case basis.

Foreign Service Officer Selection Process

Testing Window Dates:

September 8-15, 2007; December 1-8, 2007 and quarterly in 2008

Registration Timelines:

- **Beginning mid-July 2007, register online any time**
- **Registration for a test administration window closes 48 hours prior to the opening of each test window; for the September 8-15 test window, the deadline is September 5, 2007**
- **Test center seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning August 2007; seats are limited to 5,000 per test window**

Eligibility Requirements to Take the Test:

- Applicants must be citizens of the United States.
- Applicants must be at least 20 years old on the day they submit their registration package. They must be at least 21 years of age to be appointed as a Foreign Service Officer. Applicants must be no older than 59 on the date they submit their registration package. Appointment as a Foreign Service Officer must occur before an applicant reaches the age of 60.
- Applicants must be available for worldwide assignment.
- No applicant will be considered who has previously been separated from the Foreign Service under sections §607, §608, §610 or §611 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu of separation under these provisions. In addition, no applicant will be considered who has previously been separated for failure to receive a career appointment under section §306 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu thereof.
- *No specific educational level or proficiency in a foreign language is required for applicants.*

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Foreign Service Officer Selection Process in 2007-2008

The computer-based Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) will be offered in September and December 2007, and quarterly beginning in 2008. Each test window will be eight days in length, providing multiple testing times within it. There is no limit on the number of times an applicant may take the FSOT, but it can be taken only once in a 12-month period.

Registration

Applicants register online by completing a registration package consisting of an Application Form and six Personal Narrative questions about their qualifications and experiences. Registrants must submit the registration package before they can reserve a test date at a test center. Test seats will be limited to 5,000 during each test window, and invitations to reserve a seat will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis according to when the complete registration package is received. Registrants must have an e-mail address to use throughout the selection process. Those requesting reasonable accommodation are urged to submit the registration package at least three weeks prior to the requested test date to ensure that the requested accommodation can be arranged by the test date.

Registrations will remain active until an applicant takes the FSOT or up to a maximum period of 12 months from the date of registration package submission, whichever comes first. If an applicant does not schedule a test date and take the test, or is not selected to schedule a test date within that period, the applicant will need to submit a new registration package after 12 months from the date of the original registration submission.

E-mail Invitation to Schedule Test Appointment

After submitting the registration package, and provided seats are available for a test window, applicants will be notified by e-mail with instructions for scheduling a test seat appointment. Applicants will be given a one-week window during which they must schedule the test date and time. Upon scheduling a test appointment, an applicant will receive an e-mail confirmation of the appointment date and time. The applicant must print this e-mail notification and bring it to the test center on the scheduled test date.

Foreign Service Officer Test

Applicants will appear at their selected test center to take the Foreign Service Officer Test. Applicants must bring a copy of their e-mail notification that confirmed their test date, time and location and a **valid (not expired) U.S. Government issued photo identification**, such as a driver's license, passport, or military ID. Test center supervisors are authorized to refuse admittance to applicants whose identities cannot be positively established. No other items will be allowed in the test area. Applicants will be assessed a fee of \$50.00 for failure to cancel the seat at least 48-hours before the test date or for failure to appear for the test. Applicants will be

asked to provide credit card information when they register for no-show fee collection. An applicant cannot reserve a seat for a future test date until the no-show fee has been paid.

Critical Needs Language Testing

Candidates who indicate on their Application Form knowledge of Arabic, Chinese-Mandarin, Hindi, Persian-Dari, Persian-Farsi, or Urdu will be asked to schedule a telephone test in the foreign language. Instructions on how to arrange the telephone test will be provided to candidates by e-mail immediately following the test administration.

Qualifications Evaluation Panel

Foreign Service Officer Test results, as well as registration information (Application Form and Personal Narrative), will be forwarded to a Qualifications Evaluation Panel for review. The panel will select those candidates who will be invited to the Oral Assessment.

Results Letter

Candidates use their personal login ID and password chosen by them at registration to retrieve online the results of the selection process. Candidates are responsible for remembering this ID and password. Candidates will be sent an e-mail with directions for downloading the results letter. Candidates who change their e-mail address must contact ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070. Changes may also be faxed to ACT at (319) 337-1122 and must include the candidate's full name and Social Security number.

Career Track

Registrants should fully educate themselves about the five Foreign Service career tracks: Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy. Descriptions of the career tracks are contained in this guide and at our website, careers.state.gov. Applicants will be required to select their career track when registering for the exam. **Applicants will NOT have the opportunity to change career track after submitting their online registration, so careful thought should be put into making this decision.**

Section I

The Foreign Service of the United States

The Foreign Service--its name invokes visions of intrigue in faraway places. A career in the Foreign Service can offer excitement, challenge, and the satisfaction of serving your country. The Foreign Service is first and foremost a diverse corps of working professionals who are dedicated to representing America's interests and responding to the needs of American citizens in other countries.

If you are a U.S. citizen who cares about your country and its leadership in the international arena, and who is talented enough and tough enough to get the job done, consider a career in the Foreign Service. The world has gone through many dramatic changes recently, and the career diplomats of the Foreign Service have been in the forefront of those changes.

A Foreign Service career is more than just a job. It is a way to serve your country and reach your professional goals. While the Foreign Service requires uncommon commitment, and sometimes involves hardships, it also offers unique rewards and opportunities.

Diplomacy is America's first line of defense. Sustained military strength and flexibility are necessary to assure national security, but the conduct of U.S. relations with the nations of the world, through an effective international presence and discerning diplomatic leadership, is what makes the United States a force for peace. The diplomatic investments we make now to prevent conflict, promote democracy, and protect the environment, decrease the possibilities of much more costly conflicts later and help ensure the prosperity and well-being of the American people.

• Global Challenges of the New Diplomacy

The challenges to today's Foreign Service extend well beyond the confines of traditional diplomacy. There are many new issues of critical importance to our nation's foreign policy: strengthening democratization and human rights around the world, halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, strengthening peacekeeping capabilities, dealing more effectively with global environmental problems, elevating our concern about global population, refugee and migration issues, fighting international crime and terrorism, dealing with ethnic and religious affairs, and penetrating new markets for American business.

To deal effectively in the foreign affairs environment of the twenty-first century, the Foreign Service must develop new skills and greater knowledge in areas such as administration and management, economics, trade, science, technology, and the environment.

To be truly representative of today's United States, the Foreign Service must consist of the best of America's people from all racial and ethnic origins, from diverse educational backgrounds, from varied economic and social backgrounds, and from every state in the nation.

- **The Lifestyle**

A career in the Foreign Service offers the pride and satisfaction that come from representing the United States and protecting American interests abroad. It can also involve uncommon hardships. Many overseas posts are in small or remote countries where harsh climates, health hazards, no e-mail, and other discomforts exist, and where American-style amenities frequently are unavailable. To succeed in the Foreign Service, one must be strongly motivated, enjoy the challenge of formidable competition, and possess an ardent dedication to public service.

- **The Search**

The search for extraordinary women and men to serve as Foreign Service Officers is intense, and the qualifying process is rigorous, demanding, and highly competitive.

- **The First Step**

Those interested in taking the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) must complete online a registration package consisting of an Application Form and Personal Narrative, both integral components of the selection process. Once the registration package has been submitted, applicants will be informed by e-mail when they may schedule a seat to take the FSOT. The FSOT will be offered up to four times per year during eight-day windows at numerous locations in the United States and abroad. Seats during each test window will be limited, with seat allocation determined on a first come-first-served basis according to when the registration package was submitted. The registration package can be accessed and completed on our website, careers.state.gov.

- **Employment Time Frame**

Application to become a Foreign Service Officer begins with registration. Applicants who pass the Foreign Service Officer Test and who are successful during the Qualifications Evaluation Panel review must then successfully complete an all-day oral assessment process, undergo a background investigation, receive a medical clearance, and pass the final suitability review, all described in this guide. The Foreign Service Officer Selection Process is a multi-phase process and one that requires a unique commitment from the candidate.

- **Timeframe**

Activity	For 2007-2008 test dates
Online registrations accepted at ACT FSO Test seat scheduling	Continuous registration beginning mid-July 2007 Beginning August 2007, test seat appointments will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis according to when a complete registration package was submitted for the 5,000 test seats available during each test window.
FSO Test administered	Eight-day windows several times per year; check careers.state.gov for test schedule.
Critical Need Language Testing	Approximately 1 week after FSOT administration.
Results letters ready for downloading	Approximately 10-12 weeks after Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) administration.
Website for oral assessment scheduling opens	Approximately 12 weeks after FSOT administration.
Oral assessments begin	Approximately 14 weeks after FSOT administration.

- **What Does a Foreign Service Officer Do?**

Foreign Service Officers are the front-line professionals representing the Department of State at all U.S. embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic missions. They can be sent anywhere in the world, at any time, to serve the diplomatic needs of the United States. With representation in over 160 countries, the Department of State offers Foreign Service Officers unparalleled opportunities to serve their country.

The Department of State faces a growing and complex web of foreign policy challenges and therefore seeks not only candidates interested in political science and international relations, but also candidates who can manage programs and human resources. Transnational issues will also characterize the diplomacy of the future. Among these new priorities are counterterrorism, science and technology—including the global fight against diseases such as AIDS and efforts to save the environment—anti-narcotics efforts, and trade. The Department of State also has an increasing need for candidates with training and experience in 1) management and administration, and 2) economic policy issues.

The Department of State requires that applicants select a functional area of specialization, or “career track,” when registering to take the Foreign Service Officer Test. The five Foreign Service career tracks are: Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy. The choice of a career track is the first important decision potential Foreign Service Officers must make. Prospective candidates are urged to read carefully the following descriptions of the five career tracks, as well as the comprehensive supplemental information available at careers.state.gov. Once registrants have selected a career track during the registration process, they will not be able to change it.

CAREER TRACK CHOICES

- **Consular**

You are escorting an American woman who has come to retrieve her two children, abducted by their father from the United States. She has received permission from the local court to take the children home, but you are concerned she may encounter problems. Sure enough, she and the children are stopped by passport officers who place her under arrest for kidnapping. Through the police you discover that the father has obtained a stop order from a local prosecutor, and you quickly contact the Ministry of Justice to intercede for the American mother. Awaiting a reply at the airport police station, you see the father arrive to receive the children. You ask the police to intervene but they refuse. The Ministry of Justice finally responds, ordering the mother's release and giving her temporary custody of the children. She and the children leave without further incident and the matter is later resolved through the courts.

You will face many situations in your career as a consular officer requiring quick thinking under stress. You develop and use a wide range of skills, from managing resources and conducting public outreach to assisting Americans in distress. You are also the front line of defense in protecting U.S. borders from foreigners who seek to break U.S. laws.

As a junior officer, you will probably supervise several locally-hired employees as you manage the crucial work of adjudicating visas to determine who may enter the United States. You will also provide American Citizen Services (ACS) to assist American citizens in emergency situations, such as arrest or hospitalization, and with routine matters, such as passport issuance and notarial services. You will respond to inquiries from a range of sources, including attorneys and congressional offices. You will also work to combat consular fraud. You are the first and, in many cases, only contact many people have with the U.S. embassy or consulate.

As a mid-level officer, you will manage a small consular section or part of a large one, such as the ACS unit, anti-fraud unit or visa unit. You will probably supervise American junior officers and a number of Foreign Service National employees (FSNs). You will have the opportunity to make complex decisions regarding visas and American Citizen Services, show your resourcefulness, and resolve challenging management issues involving workflow and human resources. You will also provide guidance to junior officers in all areas of consular operations. If you work in the Consular Affairs Bureau in Washington, you will probably provide support to consular officers in the field on visa, ACS, fraud, and management issues.

As a senior officer, you will manage a large consular section and will supervise a number of American officers and local staff members. You will report to the embassy's senior management and to the Consular Affairs Bureau in Washington on all consular matters. In addition, you will engage in a variety of public outreach functions, such as speaking to the press or to American organizations. In a Washington assignment, you will probably head up an office with policy responsibility for fraud or visa operations, adoption and other children's issues, or other services.

- **Economic**

You are helping to negotiate a new “Open Skies” civil aviation treaty with a major European country that is a popular tourist destination for thousands of Americans. Your efforts will bring potentially millions of dollars of new business to U.S. airlines every week, lower prices for passengers, and result in more flights from which to choose. Even better, you soon see the results of your efforts as the U.S. airlines launch advertising campaigns for the upcoming tourist season.

As an economic officer, you use economic analysis skills to develop expert knowledge of the economic foreign policy issues facing the U.S. and to advance U.S. economic and commercial interests. You build wide contact networks in host countries to gain information on local developments and report and provide advice on these matters to Washington policy makers. You also advocate for U.S. interests both in bilateral and multilateral fora. American companies having interests in the host country may look to you for accurate information and help. You seek a fair playing ground for these companies, arguing against unfair barriers to trade. You also identify opportunities for U.S. exports and provide this information to the U.S. Department of Commerce and others. In Washington, you work with other agencies and with organizations outside of government, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the IMF and the World Bank. You may also work on related issues, such as those affecting the environment.

As a junior officer, you will work in a section under the direction of a more experienced officer. You will develop a network of contacts in the host government and local business community so as to keep informed on local developments. You will prepare economic analyses and may recommend strategies for implementation of U.S. policies. At a small post, you may supervise one or two locally-hired employees who work on trade issues, and manage a small commercial library.

As a mid-level officer, you may be chief of a small economic affairs section, supervising a small local staff and one or two junior officers. You may brief the Ambassador and visiting dignitaries and business people on local conditions and issues that affect U.S. policy, and support the visits of U.S. officials on these matters. You will report or supervise reporting to Washington. As instructed, you will seek to persuade the host government to support U.S. policies on a range of economic and commercial issues.

As a senior officer, you may have major responsibility for developing and implementing U.S. policy on bilateral and multilateral economic and trade issues, including debt relief, free trade, international finance and development assistance. From a Washington assignment, you will likely travel as the USG negotiator of bilateral or multilateral aviation, environment, or investment treaties. You will have opportunities to be an office director, supervising a large number of officers. At our embassies, you may manage a large economic section, advising the Ambassador on the full range of economic issues. You will make numerous demarches to the host government and meet with host government officials at the Ministries of Finance, Trade, Economy, Communications, Transportation, Environment, Labor, as well as the Central Bank, Civil Aviation Authority, or Chambers of Commerce.

- **Management**

You are negotiating with a landlord for the lease of a multi-million dollar embassy annex when you receive a call from your office assistant. The Ambassador has asked you to participate in a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss street closures and building permit issues. You are then scheduled to attend the inter-agency housing board meeting, followed by a budget briefing and finally an evening event at the local international school.

As a management officer, you use the same skills as good business managers in multinational corporations. You employ the resources of the U.S. government to support the work of the Foreign Service. You and your team maintain U.S. government offices and residences, procure equipment, supplies and services for staff, supervise recruitment and hiring of all local staff, advocate for the interests of the embassy with the host government, and ensure efficient handling of budgets within complex regulations.

As a junior officer, you spend more time out of the office than in it. “Management by walking around” is how you solve problems. You may run a general services unit within the management office of a large embassy, or you may be the sole management officer in a small embassy. You learn the inner workings of the embassy, and come to know your customers: the Chief of Mission (Ambassador), Deputy Chief of Mission, Principal Officers, heads of other U.S. Government agencies, and the many local and American staff members (and their families). Working closely with your local staff, you have broad contacts with host-country officials and local business people. You use and develop your foreign language capabilities, test your negotiating skills, and learn what works in the host country’s culture and what doesn’t. You adapt to local levels of infrastructure support to make the embassy’s work possible. You have decision-making authority and autonomy to resolve problems.

As a mid-level officer, you will run a management office for a medium-size embassy or consulate, or perhaps supervise a human resources unit for more than 1,000 employees, including both American and locally-hired staff, at a large embassy. You may be responsible for the proper handling of a \$50 million budget. Your embassy may need maintenance for 200 government-owned and short-term leased residences and office buildings, or a 100-vehicle motor pool. As head of a management office, you may present documents to the host government on interpretation of diplomatic privileges and immunities, applications of tax reciprocity laws, and spousal employment. You may formally introduce to the embassy the latest management practices or other “best practices” business systems.

As with senior officers in other career tracks, you may be a Deputy Chief of Mission or Ambassador, a Principal Officer at a large U.S. consulate, or a management counselor at one of our largest and most complicated posts. In a Washington assignment, you may direct an office that determines budget allocations for embassies throughout a region, funds and directs the building of new embassies, or coordinates assignments of Foreign Service personnel.

- **Political**

It is late on election night, but as the embassy's sole political officer you are in close touch with your media and host-country contacts, waiting for the final results for an urgent report to Washington. You have on hand biographies of host-country key figures who could be elected to the new government. For weeks you have analyzed their positions on issues vital to the United States, and consulted your contacts about the implications of the possible outcomes. In short, you know what you will write; you just need to know who won. Impatient, you consider phoning a good contact who is on the local election committee. You would like his inside view, but do not want anyone to think that you were involved in any way in the polling. Just then, the results are announced, and you quickly draft your report for the Ambassador's approval.

As a political officer, you often work behind the scenes to analyze and report on local issues and events. You have excellent communication skills, both oral and written, to convey clearly, concisely and persuasively often complex messages. In-depth knowledge of local culture and history helps you understand events and tailor the U.S. message most effectively. You draw on that knowledge to advise U.S. policy makers of local views and their implications. You use interpersonal skills to develop contacts for information exchange and to promote U.S. positions.

As a junior officer, you will likely have your own portfolio, probably focusing on one segment of society, such as the major groups in religion, labor or academia. You will make contacts with leaders of this segment, and with officials at the appropriate level in the major political parties, the Foreign Ministry, and other ministries. You may supervise a locally-hired political specialist who has developed contacts in important segments of society and who advises you on local political and social developments. You will follow local newspapers and publications, and accompany more senior officers on calls, taking notes and writing reports on the meetings.

As a mid-level officer, you will serve as political section head at a small post, where you will advise the Ambassador, maintain contacts with political figures, and supervise one or more junior officers and locally-hired political specialists. You will monitor and report on key issues, present demarches to the host government, and meet with other diplomats to explain the U.S. position on various issues and gather information. You will arrange visits of Washington officials, scheduling meetings and accompanying them to take reporting notes. You may serve at the U.S. mission to an international organization, where you will meet regularly with the organization's staff to present the U.S. view and collect information, or with officers from other missions to coordinate a response to a particular issue. You will assist U.S. delegations coming from Washington by gathering information and papers in advance, and by acting as their liaison with the secretariat and other delegations.

As a senior officer, you may manage a large political section and supervise a number of officers. You will advise the Ambassador and present demarches to the host government. You will meet regularly with political and social leaders, and perhaps give speeches explaining the U.S. position on a variety of issues. If assigned to Washington, you will likely direct the work of an office or be an advisor to a senior Department official. You may head delegations to meetings abroad, both bilateral and multilateral. You will be responsible for drafting policy documents and statements for senior Department officials and for use by embassies abroad.

- **Public Diplomacy**

The front pages of the local morning newspapers prominently accuse the U.S. government of “environmental terrorism,” claiming U.S. involvement in a toxic waste dump north of the capital. You alert the Ambassador to the story and then, with the help of your locally-hired assistant, weigh its implications. You consult on the facts with the embassy’s economic officer and learn that an American company did play a role in the matter, but the Federal government did not. By mid-morning, you have edited the economic counselor’s draft press statement to ensure the facts and responsibility are clear. By noon, you have faxed it to local press and granted three radio interviews in the local language. Although some damage has been done to the U.S. image, you and your team have corrected misperceptions of American responsibility.

The work of a public diplomacy officer is varied and demanding. It involves a high degree of outside contact work, dealing with the independent media, Ministry of Information, universities, cultural and arts institutions, libraries, think tanks, and non-governmental organizations. You are the “face” of the U.S. embassy, maintaining contacts with key people who influence public opinion. You and your embassy colleagues identify key people and institutions where a special effort is vital to achieve mutual understanding. You depict U.S. views and policies accurately and serve as the antenna for local editorial and public opinion, detecting shifts that can affect U.S. interests. You need excellent communication and language skills, a strong sense of cultural and other nuances that affect how the U.S. message is received, and the management skills needed for handling cultural education exchanges and other programs.

As a junior officer, you will be assigned as assistant cultural or information officer, reporting to a public affairs officer. You may coordinate exchange programs that send embassy-selected individuals to the United States on three-week fact-finding tours, oversee the website and use of other new technologies, or serve on a local Fulbright selection board and monitor the travel and professional programs of grantees, both in your host country and in the United States. As an information officer, you will be the principal embassy contact for reporters, editors, broadcasters, and journalists who seek up-to-date and accurate fact checks on U.S. policy or assistance with methodology of fair reporting. Through your work in bolstering the media sector, you promote U.S. core values of free speech and transparency.

As a mid-level officer, you may manage the cultural or information section of a U.S. embassy, overseeing the budget, programming exchange opportunities, and organizing focused programs and discussion groups with local colleagues on topics of mutual interest. You may also be responsible for an information resource center or language institute. A mid-level officer often sits on Fulbright boards or chairs a Fulbright commission.

As a senior officer, you may manage regional or global exchange programs from Washington, or represent an embassy overseas as its spokesperson and as manager of its culture and media programs. You may be responsible for significant budget and staff resources and usually are responsible for country-wide programs. As a senior country public affairs officer, you are a member of the Ambassador’s senior staff and advise the Ambassador and other senior colleagues about the media, cultural, and educational climate of the country.

PREREQUISITES FOR PERFORMING WELL IN ANY CAREER TRACK

A 1997 job analysis of the Foreign Service Officer position identified certain knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) which prospective Foreign Service Officers should possess prior to entry into the Foreign Service.

Knowledge of the following areas was identified as essential for success across all five career tracks (Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy): proper English usage; U.S. society, culture, economy, history, government, political systems, and the Constitution; world history and geography; and world political and social issues. In addition, all Foreign Service Officers should have a general understanding of basic mathematics and statistics, computer usage, principles of management, interpersonal communication, and basic economic principles.

The 1997 job analysis also indicated that greater or more in-depth knowledge is needed in some areas, depending on the career track. In-depth knowledge may be required in the following areas: U.S. and international political and economic principles, issues, and history; U.S. government and non-governmental agencies and organizations and their interactions with the Department of State; U.S. diplomacy, democratic philosophy, and educational practices; U.S. policy issues and public and foreign policy formulation; legislation and laws related to Foreign Service issues; international economics, finance and commerce; administrative methods and procedures; interpersonal communication and behavior; and information and media resources.

In addition to the above, a 2006-2007 update of the 1997 job analysis confirms that the following skills and abilities are important in the work of a Foreign Service Officer across all career tracks: strong interpersonal and communication skills; adaptability and stress tolerance; good problem-solving and decision-making skills; integrity and dependability; ability to plan and set priorities; and initiative and leadership.

Section II

THE FOREIGN SERVICE SELECTION PROCESS

- **Qualifying for Appointment to the Foreign Service Officer Program**

Most successful FSO candidates have at least a bachelor's degree. In recent years, many candidates have also had advanced degrees in international relations, economics, business administration, law, journalism, or other areas. Many also had work experience in various fields before their appointment and have worked, attended school, or traveled overseas. Please see page 1 of this guide for a list of eligibility requirements.

- **A Four Stage Selection Process**

Entry into the Foreign Service involves extensive screening through a four stage selection process that includes: 1) Registration (Application Form and Personal Narrative); 2) Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT); 3) Qualifications Evaluation Panel; and 4) Oral Assessment.

1. Registration

To register for the FSOT, applicants first complete an online registration package that consists of an Application Form and Personal Narrative questions that allow them to provide information about their background and qualifications. The complete registration package must be submitted before the registrant is invited to select a test seat appointment at a test center. The registration package will take approximately three hours to complete.

- * Application Form: basic factual information about applicants' school and work history.
- * Personal Narrative: six questions about the skills, knowledge and abilities an applicant would bring to the Foreign Service based on experience and qualifications. The questions seek a great deal of information in a limited space (200 words per question). Registrants should highlight their most salient qualifications. For example, recent graduates with little work experience would likely focus on academic and volunteer experience; candidates who have been in the work force for a number of years would likely focus on jobs and associated responsibilities they have had. Registrants should think broadly about their personal, educational and professional experience, including paid and volunteer work experience, educational achievements, training, awards, hobbies, sports and travel. Registrants will also be asked to provide references, persons who can verify the information provided. All information is subject to verification, and factual misrepresentation may be grounds for terminating a registrant's candidacy.

2. FSOT

The FSOT will be administered at commercial test centers throughout the United States and, as test administration development allows, at hundreds of locations abroad. The test lasts approximately three hours and draws upon a candidate's writing skills, general background, experience and education, and measures knowledge of English expression and other subjects

basic to the functions of Foreign Service Officers. The test includes three multiple-choice sections—general job knowledge, English expression, and a biographic information section that measures skills and abilities such as integrity, problem solving, and cultural sensitivity—and a 30 minute written essay. Seats for each FSOT administration will be limited, and invitations to schedule a seat appointment at a test center will be sent by e-mail on a first-come, first-served basis according to when registrants submit their complete registration package.

The Test Day: Registrants must report to their assigned test center no later than the time shown in their confirmation notification e-mail. Late arrivals cannot be accommodated. **Registrants will be assessed a no-show fee of \$50.00 for failure to cancel the seat at least 48-hours before the test date or for failure to appear for the test.** A registrant cannot reserve a seat for a future test date until the no-show fee has been paid.

Examination Content: The FSO Test consists of the following components:

- * Job Knowledge Test: The job-related knowledge test measures the candidate's depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding of a range of subjects identified in the 1997 job analysis as important for performing the tasks required of Foreign Service Officers. Topics covered appear later in this guide.
- * English Expression and Usage Test: This test measures knowledge of correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation and organization required for written reports and for editing the written work of others. The test includes questions in each of these areas. Sample questions appear later in this guide.
- * Biographic Information: The biographic information section provides an assessment of candidates' prior work, education, and job-relevant life experiences, highlighting attributes such as the way they resolve conflicts, interact with others, adapt to other cultures, and set priorities. The questionnaire does not penalize candidates who have not gone to college, who have no previous work experience, or who have varied patterns of education and experience. Rather, it credits candidates for what they have achieved relative to the opportunities they have had.
- * Essay: Candidates will have 30 minutes to draft an essay on a computer on an assigned topic. The essay will be evaluated on the quality of writing, including development of ideas, structure, clear language and the standard use of conventions—not on opinions expressed.

Performance on the FSOT is based on scored items only. In each section of the test, there are a small number of unscored items that are included for research purposes. Since these items are indistinguishable from those that are scored, it is important that examinees answer all the items in each section of the test to the best of their ability.

A minimum score for the multiple choice sections of the FSOT is established for eligibility for

essays to be scored. Candidates who obtain this minimum score on the multiple choice sections of the FSOT will have their essay graded. A minimum score on the multiple choice test and the essay is established for eligibility to continue in the selection process. Files of candidates who have achieved the minimum score on both the multiple choice and essay tests are forwarded to the Qualifications Evaluation Panel for review.

Candidates who have indicated knowledge of one of five critical need languages—Arabic, Chinese-Mandarin, Hindi, Persian-Dari, Persian-Farsi, and Urdu—will be asked to schedule a telephone test in the foreign language with the Department of State’s FSI Language Testing Unit. Instructions on these telephone test procedures will be provided to candidates claiming proficiency in one of these languages via e-mail immediate following the test administration.

3. Qualifications Evaluation Panel (QEP)

The QEP will review the registration information (Application Form and Personal Narrative) and the FSOT/Essay results to select those candidates who will be invited to the Oral Assessment. All applicants will receive an electronic results letter from ACT once the QEP review is complete.

4. Foreign Service Oral Assessment

ACT will notify candidates whether or not they have been invited to take part in a full-day oral assessment conducted by the Foreign Service Board of Examiners. The invitation to the oral assessment process is in part based on anticipated hiring needs. Assessments are conducted in Washington, D.C. and in a limited number of other major cities in the United States. Travel to the oral assessment site is at the candidate’s expense.

The assessment center exercises are based on the 13 dimensions identified as essential to Foreign Service jobs. The oral assessment tests the abilities and personal characteristics considered necessary to perform that work. Candidates are advised at the end of the assessment day if they are eligible to continue their candidacy. For more information and a sample of the oral assessment, go to careers.state.gov.

• Request for Re-Scoring Answer Documents

The Department of State and ACT, Inc. maintain a variety of quality control procedures to ensure the accuracy of scores and score reporting. However, if you think a scoring error has occurred, you may submit a written request for re-scoring. The answer documents for all three multiple-choice sections will be re-scored by hand for a fee of \$30. The fee to re-evaluate the written essay is also \$30. Copies of the written essay or multiple choice answer sheets will not be released or provided to examinees.

The results of re-scoring will be reported to you in writing two to three weeks after the request is received. Requests for re-scoring must be received by ACT not more than five months after the test date. In your letter, identify yourself by your full name, date of birth, mailing address, and your test date and location, and advise which section of the test you want re-scored. Enclose a check or money order payable to ACT, Inc. for the appropriate amount and mail to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070.

- **Study Guide**

A study guide is available to help candidates prepare for the Foreign Service Officer Test and oral assessment. The study guide contains sample topics for the written essay and sample versions of the English expression and job knowledge segments of the written exam. Explanations of the answers for the two segments are provided as well. There are also examples of the biographic information questionnaire. The study guide may be ordered in hardcopy or downloaded from the State Department's website: careers.state.gov. There is also an order form at the back of this guide.

TESTING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) is prepared and administered by ACT for the U.S. Department of State. In accordance with Federal law, the Department of State will provide reasonable accommodation to enable qualified applicants with disabilities to take the FSOT. Accommodation may include such actions as provision by ACT of a reader or a person to record answers, a separate testing room, extra testing time, a braille or cassette version of the test, and/or large-print versions of the exam.

All registrants, including those requesting accommodations, must register online.

Requests for accommodations and **complete**, current (within the last five years) supporting documentation must be received at least four weeks prior to the requested test date, along with a copy of the online confirmation received after submission of an online application. Registrant should send requests for accommodations and complete supporting documentation to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070. **Requests that are incomplete or are not supported by appropriate documentation by the registration deadline may not be approved.** Candidates who need accommodations are requested to register as early as possible in order for ACT to have sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Those receiving accommodation will receive a letter from ACT confirming the accommodation to be provided. If the request is incomplete or does not support the accommodation request, ACT will notify the registrant in writing. The registrant may then provide complete or updated documents prior to the deadline. Every effort will be made to provide accommodation at the registrant's chosen test center. However, some test centers may be unable to provide certain types of accommodation.

Application Requirements for Any Type of Disability

1. Completed registration. All registrants, including those requesting accommodations, must register online.
2. A written request for accommodation, including:
 - (a) a detailed description of the disability; and
 - (b) a detailed description of the accommodation necessary for the registrant to take the written examination. If additional testing time is necessary, the registrant request must include the precise amount of time needed; for example, time and a half, or regular test

time but longer breaks between sections.

3. A letter, prepared within the last five years and on office letterhead, from the registrant's physician or other specialist licensed or certified to diagnose and treat the disability. The physician's or specialist's letter must include:
 - (a) current professional diagnosis of the registrant's disability;
 - (b) the specific accommodation required as a result of the disability;
 - (c) an explanation of the need for the accommodation and how the functional limits of the disability relate to test-taking activity; and
 - (d) the treatment provided and the last date of treatment.
4. A statement from the specialist or doctor describing past testing accommodation, if any.

If the accommodation required includes additional testing time, the registrant's physician or specialist must include the precise amount of time needed **as well as the diagnostic basis for the additional time**. If the accommodation required is due to a diagnosis of a **cognitive (learning) disability**, the physician or specialist must include additional documentation.

Additional Documentation Requirements for Diagnosis of Cognitive (Learning) Disability

If a registrant requires testing accommodation due to a cognitive disability, the registrant's physician or specialist must provide the following documentation **in addition to what is described above**. All tests used by the physician or specialist to support a diagnosis of cognitive disability must be reliable, valid, standardized, and age appropriate. All standard scores and percentiles (including those of sub-tests) must be included in the documentation.

1. A report that includes a description of the **presenting problem(s)** and its (their) **developmental history**, along with a **specific diagnosis** and evidence that alternative explanations were ruled out.
2. A neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation that includes the results of an **aptitude assessment** using a complete and comprehensive battery. (The preferred instrument is the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III. Another acceptable instrument is the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability.)
3. The results of a complete **achievement battery**, including a report of current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension) and written language (e.g., the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement; the Nelson-Denny Reading Skills Test; or the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults).
4. The results of an assessment of **information processing** (e.g., short- and long-term memory, sequential memory, processing speed, executive functioning) using appropriate instruments (e.g., the Wechsler Memory Scale or relevant sub-tests from the Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised; Tests of Cognitive Ability).
5. The results of other appropriate assessment measures to support a differential diagnosis or to disentangle the cognitive disability from co-existing neurological and/or personality disorders.
6. **If the diagnosed cognitive disability is attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD),**

the physician or specialist should provide relevant batteries as described above to determine patterns that support attention problems.

The physician or specialist also must provide:

- a measure of reading speed;
- a review of DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for ADHD;
- a description of which impairment-causing symptoms were present in childhood;
- A description of which current symptoms have been present for at least the past six months, and how the symptoms relate to the test-taking activity.

THE PATH TO APPOINTMENT

Candidates who are successful in the oral assessments have several additional selection steps before they can be offered an appointment as a Foreign Service Officer career candidate, pending tenure. Each candidate must receive medical and security clearances, and pass a final suitability review.

• Worldwide Availability

Worldwide availability is an essential qualification for appointment to the Foreign Service. Regardless of who administers the medical exam, the Department's Office of Medical Services determines whether or not a candidate is available for assignment to Department of State posts worldwide. Many medical conditions that require monitoring or follow-up care, or are prone to exacerbation in certain overseas environments, will likely result in a finding of non-worldwide availability and thus disqualify a candidate from eligibility. In cases where medical problems lead to a denial of medical clearance, the candidate may request a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement by the Employment Review Committee. The committee operates on a case-by-case basis, and only grants waivers if it is clearly in the best interests of the Foreign Service.

• Medical Clearance

Those entering the Foreign Service must be able to serve at any overseas post. Many facilities are remote, unhealthy, or have limited medical support. Therefore, each candidate must meet medical fitness standards which are, of necessity, often more rigorous than those of other professions. Prior to being appointed to the Foreign Service, candidates must have a thorough medical examination and receive an unlimited medical clearance for assignment worldwide. Candidates who pass the oral assessment are provided with instructions for the examining physician(s) which outline the precise requirements, and a voucher which authorizes the Department of State to pay for the exam. Candidates living within a fifty-mile radius of Washington, D.C. must have the medical exam performed by the Office of Medical Services. Children under the age of 6 must be examined by their own family physician. While candidates must be medically cleared for full overseas duty, the Department of State no longer considers the medical condition of family members for pre-employment purposes. However, the

Department still requires medical clearances for family members before they can travel overseas to accompany an employee on assignment at U.S. Government expense. Family members who, for medical reasons, cannot accompany an employee on an overseas assignment may be eligible to receive a separate maintenance allowance.

- **Background Investigation**

A comprehensive security background investigation, conducted by the U.S. Department of State in cooperation with other federal, state, and local agencies, provides information necessary to determine a candidate's suitability for appointment to the Foreign Service and for a top secret security clearance. The process considers such factors as: failure to repay a US Government-guaranteed loan or meet tax obligations, or failure to register for the Selective Service; past problems with credit or bankruptcy; unsatisfactory employment records; a criminal record or other violations of the law; drug or alcohol abuse; and less than honorable discharge from the armed forces. Extensive travel, education, residence and/or employment overseas may extend the time it takes to obtain a clearance. Candidates who cannot be granted a security clearance are ineligible for appointment. Candidates who hold an active top secret security clearance from another U.S. federal agency and whose last background investigation is no more than seven years old, can have their security clearance transferred. However, for purposes of determining a candidate's suitability (see section below), candidates whose background investigation is more than two years old will still need to update documentation.

- **Final Review Panel**

When the security clearance process is completed, the Board of Examiners will convene a Final Review Panel. The panel assesses all of the information related to the applicant to determine suitability for appointment to the Foreign Service. All Foreign Service applicants must receive a valid medical, security and suitability clearance as a final condition of employment.

- **Candidates with Disabilities**

The Department of State provides reasonable accommodation to Foreign Service candidates with disabilities throughout the pre-employment process. Please see pages 17-18 of this registration guide for detailed information on registration procedures. For qualified candidates who will require accommodation upon appointment, the Office of Employee Relations is responsible for determining whether reasonable accommodation can be provided. To be considered qualified, a candidate must meet all requirements for appointment to the Foreign Service. This includes an unlimited medical clearance from the Office of Medical Services or a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement from the Employment Review Committee.

- **Career Track Hiring Registers**

Candidates who pass the oral assessment and who have successfully passed the security background investigation, the medical clearance and the final suitability review process, are placed on a rank-ordered career track hiring register (based on the career track chosen by the candidate). Appointments to entry-level positions are made from the five registers. If a candidate declines two job offers, s/he are removed from the register. Candidates with veteran points and/or a demonstrated professional-level speaking proficiency in a foreign language can earn bonus points and improve their rank-order positions on the hiring lists. Information about these bonuses is provided upon successful completion of the oral assessment.

- **Yearly Hires**

The number of candidates hired each year varies with the needs of the Foreign Service and does not always equal the number of candidates on the registers. Every attempt is made to give new employees ample time to make personal arrangements to come on board.

- **Entry Level Salary Range**

Since the Foreign Service is a career service, appointments are made at one of three entry levels based on the candidate's education, professional experience and, if applicable, current Federal base salary. Fluency in certain foreign languages may qualify candidates for language incentive pay while serving at posts where these languages are used. Information on the current entry-level FSO salary ranges is available at our website, careers.state.gov.

- **Training**

On entering the Foreign Service, all new officers receive several weeks of basic orientation at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. An officer can expect up to seven months of subsequent training prior to the first overseas assignment, much of it involving foreign language instruction, as needed. New officers whose first overseas assignment is to a country where they already have professional competence in the language spoken there may have a significantly shorter training period.

- **Tenuring and Commissioning**

FSOs are reviewed for tenure and commissioning over a five-year period and are first reviewed after three years of service. Most career candidates can expect to be commissioned as FSOs before the end of their time-limited appointment, following approval by the Foreign Service Commissioning and Tenure Board.

Section III

Registering for the Foreign Service Officer Test

Please make sure you meet all the eligibility requirements on page 1 of this selection process guide before you register to take the Foreign Service Officer Test. No exceptions can be made to the eligibility requirements for Foreign Service Officer candidates. Those interested in taking the test must register in advance. Because of the personal information collected in the Registration package, registrants must complete their own online Application Form and Personal Narrative. Please carefully read this guide before completing your online registration.

To take the Foreign Service Officer Test, each registrant, including those requesting accommodations, must register in advance by submitting a complete application form and personal narrative questionnaire. You will be able to access the link to the registration package at careers.state.gov. Those applying for testing accommodation will also need to mail supporting documentation to ACT before the applicable deadline.

If you are having difficulty registering for the test, please contact ACT. Those calling from the United States may call ACT at (800) 205-6358; the number for those calling from overseas is (319) 341-2500. ACT is available to receive and answer calls between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time. You may also contact ACT by e-mail at fsot@act.org, or through their fax number, (319) 337-1122. Please be prepared to give ACT all necessary registration information.

Applicants who have submitted a complete registration package will be sent an e-mail authorizing them to schedule a test seat, contingent on seat availability, for the next available test window. There will be 5,000 test seats available during each test window, and candidates will be invited to schedule the test appointment on a first-come, first-served basis according to when their complete registration package was submitted. Those candidates not invited to the first test window will be invited to a later test window depending upon when their completed registration package was received.

After an applicant has submitted the registration package, and there are seats available for a given test window, the applicant will be notified by e-mail with instructions on how to schedule a test seat appointment. When applicants receive the e-mail invitation to schedule a test seat appointment, they will be given a specific one-week period during which they are eligible to request a seat.

If an applicant schedules a seat appointment and later decides s/he is unable to test on that day, s/he will be required to notify ACT. The applicant can try to reschedule for a different test day (within the available appointments) or cancel the test appointment. Cancellation must occur at least 48 hours prior to the date of the scheduled appointment. If an applicant fails to appear for the test appointment or to cancel the test appointment within 48 hours of the test date, the applicant will be required to pay a \$50.00 no-show fee.

- **Use of Data Collected in the Registration Application Form and Personal Narrative**

Responses to some items in the application form and all responses to the Personal Narrative will be used by the Qualifications Evaluation Panel to determine your qualifications and experience relative to selection as a Foreign Service Officer. Moreover, the information requested on the application form will be used for preparing and issuing admission tickets and attendance rosters, to help improve future tests, and to conduct research based on the results of the test. Your cooperation in providing responses to all items will be greatly appreciated.

The collection of information concerning disabilities is authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 92-112). The information you furnish will be used for the purpose of producing statistical reports to show agency progress in the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities and to locate individuals for voluntary participation in surveys. The reports will be used to inform agency management, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the Congress and the public of the status of programs for employment of individuals with disabilities. All such reports will be in the form of aggregate totals and will not identify you on an individual basis in any way. While self-identification is voluntary, your cooperation in providing accurate information is critical.

Information on the race, national origin, and sex of the applicants is collected in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Federal Sector Equal Employment Opportunity Regulations (29 C.F.R. 1614.601). It is disclosed only in the form of gross statistics in reports, studies or other analyses to help ensure that agency personnel practices meet the requirements of Federal law.

- **Test Center Admission and Regulations**

- ◆ All applicants, including those requesting a testing accommodation, must register online.
- ◆ Bring your scheduling confirmation e-mail (notification e-mail confirming your test location, test date and time) with you to your test center.
- ◆ You must bring a valid (not expired) U.S. Government issued state or federal photo ID such as a government-issued ID, driver's license, passport, or Military ID. Test center supervisors are authorized to refuse admittance to applicants whose identities cannot be positively established.
- ◆ Your appointment is not transferable to another person.
- ◆ A test center administrator will continuously monitor your test session. You must consent to video and audio taping of your test session and to the examination of the video and/or audio tape of your test session in the event that any questions should arise concerning possible violations of the procedures of other test takers.
- ◆ You must follow the instructions of the test administrator, represent yourself honestly, and conduct yourself quietly to avoid interfering with the performance of other test takers.
- ◆ You must not bring into the testing room any unauthorized items such as food, drinks, purses, briefcases, backpacks, cell phones, pagers, notes, note pads, photographic equipment, or any electronic devices other than those provided by, or expressly approved by the test center staff.

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- ◆ You must return all materials, including scratch paper, provided to you by the test center staff when you have completed your test and before you leave the test center.
 - ◆ You must neither give nor receive any form of unauthorized assistance during the test or any breaks.
 - ◆ If you have any questions or concerns about the test or environment, you must quietly leave the testing room to notify the test center staff. You must report all problems to test center staff.
 - ◆ You must not remove any written, printed, or recorded materials of your test from the test center. The test questions remain the property of the Department of State and you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the questions and answers.
 - ◆ You must sign in and out every time you enter or leave the testing room. You should use the restroom or otherwise address personal needs prior to beginning your test. During testing, the timer will remain running during any unscheduled breaks. You must remain in the test center and may leave only to use those restroom facilities that are closest to the test room. You must not leave the building. You cannot access a phone or your personal belongings, except in the case of an emergency. Under such circumstances, you must notify the test center staff before accessing a phone or your personal belongings. The test center staff must monitor you.
 - ◆ You will be provided earplugs upon request. You may not use your own.
 - ◆ Test center staff must be allowed 30 minutes to resolve any technical problems that may arise (including power failure). You have the option of continuing the test or requesting a rescheduling of the test for technical or other problems outside of your control taking more than 30 minutes to resolve.
 - ◆ You will be required to sign a form agreeing to abide by the above information and regulations of the test center.
 - ◆ Your failure to comply with any of the regulations listed above may affect the outcome of your test, and further may have additional consequences as determined by the Department of State.
 - ◆ Your Foreign Service Officer Test will be given only on the day and time scheduled. Makeup tests cannot be authorized for any reason.
 - ◆ You should report to the test center at the time shown on your scheduling e-mail. If you report to the center later than the time stated on your scheduling e-mail, you will not be admitted.
 - ◆ You are not permitted to continue any part of the test beyond the established time limit.
 - ◆ Scoring will be based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.

Your scheduled appointment is not transferable to another person. Registrants will be assessed a fee of \$50.00 for failure to cancel the seat at least 48 hours before the FSOT test date or for failure to appear for the test. A registrant cannot reserve a seat for another test date until any outstanding no-show fee has been paid.

If you lose your e-mail confirmation notification and do not know when you have scheduled your test appointment, you may notify the ACT Call Center at 1-800-205-6366.

- **EEO Contact**

Candidates who believe that they have been discriminated against during the pre-employment process must contact the Department of State's Office of Civil Rights, at (202) 647-9294, within 45 days of the alleged discriminatory act.

- **Reporting Results**

Results letters will be available approximately ten to twelve weeks after the date you take the Foreign Service Officer Test. You will be sent an e-mail providing directions for downloading your results letter. The results letter will specify whether or not you will be invited to the oral assessment phase of the Foreign Service Officer selection process. The personal login ID and password that you used to register will be required to retrieve your results letter online. **You will be required to retrieve your letter online. Your letter will NOT be mailed to you. The results letters for those who have been invited to the oral assessment will include information for scheduling the date and location of the oral assessment.**

The Foreign Service selection process results are provided on a pass/fail basis. The pass/fail determination is based on the level of test performance needed to ensure acceptable proficiency on the job. The number of candidates invited to the oral assessment may be based in part on hiring needs.

Test results will not be reported on the telephone for any reason.

If your address is expected to change prior to the exam results notification date, you will be given the opportunity to make the necessary changes on your answer document and give it to the supervisor at the test center. You may also call ACT at (800) 205-6358 or (319) 341-2500 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time about the change or send an e-mail to: fsot@ACT.org.

All inquiries concerning the reporting of exam results should be sent in writing to: ACT, Inc., Foreign Service Officer Test (82), P.O. Box 4070, Iowa City, IA 52243-4070. You may also call (319) 341-2500, or toll free, (800) 205-6358 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Central Time, or e-mail ACT at fsot@ACT.org. Any other inquiries about the examination should be addressed to the Staff Director, Board of Examiners, U.S. Department of State, 2401 E Street, NW, 5th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20522.

Section IV

Sample Foreign Service Officer Test Questions

1. Job Knowledge Test

To familiarize you with representative types of questions that appear in this part of the Foreign Service Written Examination, the following sample questions are provided. They are intended as examples of the subject matter covered by this test, not the degree of difficulty. An answer key can be found at the end of the Sample Tests.

DIRECTIONS: Each question or incomplete statement below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Knowledge Area: United States Government (general understanding of the composition and functioning of the Federal government, the Constitution and its history, the structure of Congress and its role in foreign affairs, as well as the United States political system and its role in governmental structure, formulation of government policies, and foreign affairs)

1. A political device of drawing irregular district lines in order to favor one political power over another is called:
 - A. gerrymandering.
 - B. filibustering.
 - C. federalizing.
 - D. rezoning.
2. Congress can override a Presidential veto of a congressional bill by:
 - A. not signing the bill.
 - B. passing the bill again by a two-thirds majority in both houses.
 - C. filibustering.
 - D. voting to place the bill in the congressional record.
3. Which of the following amendments to the Constitution affect the political process by declaring that the Federal government should not interfere with the press?
 - A. First
 - B. Fifth
 - C. Seventh
 - D. None – no amendment refers to the press

Knowledge Area: United States Society and Culture (general understanding of major events, institutions, and movements in national history, including political and economic history; as well as national customs and culture, social issues and trends, and the influence of U.S. society on foreign policy and foreign affairs)

4. The primary medium for the diffusion of American popular culture throughout the world following World War I was:
 - A. motion pictures.
 - B. newspapers.
 - C. radio.
 - D. books.
5. The architect Maya Lin is known for designing the:
 - A. Paris Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas.
 - B. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, DC.
 - C. Sears Tower, Chicago.
 - D. Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Knowledge Area: World History and Geography (general understanding of significant world historical events, issues, and developments, including their impact on U.S. foreign policy, as well as knowledge of world geography and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy)

6. The most economical route for an oil pipeline from Turkmenistan to world export markets would cross:
 - A. Iran.
 - B. Afghanistan.
 - C. Uzbekistan.
 - D. Pakistan.

7. The purpose of the South African policy of apartheid was best described as the:
- segregation of blacks from English-speaking whites.
 - control of immigration from neighboring countries.
 - protection of the economic, political, and social status of Afrikaners.
 - promotion of equal opportunity for various racial groups.

Knowledge Area: Economics (general understanding of basic economic principles, as well as a general understanding of economic issues and the economic system of the United States)

8. The Council of Economic Advisers advises which of the following on monetary and fiscal policy?
- The Federal Reserve Bank
 - The Joint Economic Committee of Congress
 - The President of the United States
 - The Senate Budget Committee
9. All of the following are examples of United States products that would typically fail to be produced to optimal output without government intervention EXCEPT:
- national defense products.
 - light provided by lighthouses.
 - new automobiles.
 - new highways.

Knowledge Area: Mathematics and Statistics (basic mathematical and statistical procedures and calculations)

10. After a 3 percent raise and a \$3,000 bonus, a worker's salary increased to \$50,000. What was the worker's salary before the raise and bonus?
- \$48,544
 - \$47,000
 - \$46,910
 - \$45,631
11. The test scores for seven students are 90, 90, 70, 40, 80, 90 and 100. What is the median score for this group?
- 70
 - 80
 - 85
 - 90

Knowledge Area: Management (general understanding of basic management and supervisory techniques and methods. Includes knowledge of human psychology, leadership, motivational strategies and equal employment practices)

12. The primary guideline for effective delegation of tasks to subordinates is to:
- delegate to subordinates only when necessary.
 - delegate both pleasant and unpleasant tasks to subordinates.
 - provide subordinates information on a "need-to-know" basis.
 - provide assistance to subordinates whenever it is requested.
13. A work group that has high performance norms and low cohesiveness will most likely have which of the following levels of performance?
- Very high
 - High
 - Moderate
 - Low

Knowledge Area: Communication (general understanding of principles of effective communication and public speaking techniques, as well as general knowledge of the common sources of information, public media and media relations)

14. Posing rhetorical questions, telling a story, and providing a quotation are all techniques that help a public speaker to:
- arouse audience curiosity.
 - avoid audience questions.
 - increase audience anxiety.
 - avoid visual aids.
15. Unless told otherwise, a professional journalist will most likely consider anything said by a source to be:
- off the record.
 - on the record.
 - on background.
 - not attributable.

Knowledge Area: Computers (general understanding of basic computer operations such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and preparing and using e-mail)

16. It is common practice of e-mail users to have some specific text automatically appear at the end of their sent messages. This text is called their:
- A. attachment.
 - B. subject.
 - C. signature.
 - D. protocol.

Knowledge Area: U.S. and International Political and Economic Principles, Issues and History

17. The National Labor Relations Act established:
- A. a “cooling off” period before workers in a critical industry could strike.
 - B. the right of federal workers in non-defense agencies to organize and strike.
 - C. the government’s right to prohibit strikes by industrial workers during wartime.
 - D. collective bargaining and the right to organize as national policy.

Knowledge Area: Legislation and Laws Related to Foreign Service Issues

18. The Freedom of Information Act, enacted by the Congress in 1966, was expanded in 1996 to encompass:
- A. audiotaped transcripts.
 - B. Supreme Court deliberations.
 - C. electronic records.
 - D. Presidential campaign contributions.

Knowledge Area: Administrative Methods and Procedures

19. In federal government budgeting, “mandatory” spending differs from “discretionary” spending in which way?
- A. Legislative committees may not cut mandatory spending levels.
 - B. Mandatory spending is not subject to the annual appropriations process.
 - C. Discretionary spending increases in one budget category must be offset by reductions elsewhere
 - D. Bills to re-categorize mandatory funding as discretionary must originate in the House.

Knowledge Area: Information and Media Resources

20. Which of the following Web-based international news sources is published by the Council on Foreign Relations?
- A. <http://www.pressdigest.org>
 - B. <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>
 - C. <http://www.associateprogram.com>
 - D. <http://www.info-strategy.com>

2. English Expression Test

DIRECTIONS: In the passages that follow, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. In the right-hand column, you will find alternatives for each underlined part. You are to choose the one that best expresses the idea, makes the statement appropriate for standard written English, or is worded most consistently with the style and tone of the passage as a whole. If you think the original version is best, choose option A., which is the same as the original version.

You may also find questions about a section of the passage, or about the passage as a whole. These questions do not refer to an underlined portion of the passage, but rather are identified by a number or numbers.

For each question, choose the alternative you consider best and circle the letter of that choice. Read each passage through once before you begin to answer the questions that accompany it. You cannot determine most answers without reading several sentences beyond the question. Be sure that you have read far enough ahead each time you choose an alternative.

¹The poaching of elephants, which goes on in the African nation of Chad, is a serious problem.

The national parks director advised the U.S. embassy on January 11 that poaching has been on the increase since the prohibition on ²three African states on hunting and the ivory trade were revised. Statistics

³maintained by the Parks Department show that during the January 1997 to June 1998 period, a total of 41 elephants were killed in Zakouma National Park, where there is, at last count, a seasonal population of 2,000 elephants. Statistics for the ⁴most recent six-month period are still being compiled by the Parks

1. A. The poaching of elephants, which goes on in the African nation of Chad, is
B. The poaching in the African nation of Chad of elephants is
C. The poaching of elephants in the African nation of Chad is
D. In the African nation of Chad the poaching of elephants are
2. A. three African states on hunting and the ivory trade were revised.
B. hunting and the ivory trade in three African states were revised.
C. three African states on hunting and the ivory trade was revised.
D. hunting and the ivory trade in three African states was revised.
3. A. maintained by the Parks Department
B. maintained, by the Parks Department,
C. by the Parks Department
D. the Parks Department maintains,
4. A. most recent six-month period are still
B. just passed six-month period are still in the process of
C. six-month period that just passed is still in the process of
D. most recent six-month period is still

⁵Department, however the department director, he was unequivocal about there being an overall worsening of the situation. He maintained that approximately five elephants per month ⁶is being killed, but that these

figures ⁷take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintain, some capacity to monitor the situation. Elephant populations also exist outside the park, and during the rainy season, even the Zakouma population is forced into

a dry-season dispersal area to the west and north ⁸that appears to be lots larger than the park itself. Poaching does occur in these ⁹zones, but it is more difficult to monitor than in the park.

¹⁰Since two game wardens were shot, and killed by poachers in Zakouma Park in December 1997, the government of Chad has temporarily increased ¹¹it's military presence in the zone, which, according to the

5.
 - A. Department, however the department director, he was unequivocal about there
 - B. Department, however, the department director was unequivocal for their
 - C. Department. However, the department director was unequivocal about their
 - D. Department. However, the department director was unequivocal about there
6.
 - A. is being killed, but that
 - B. is being killed, but that,
 - C. are being killed, but that
 - D. are being killed, but that,
7.
 - A. take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintain, some
 - B. take into account incidents within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintains some
 - C. take into account incidents, within Zakouma Park only, where the Parks Department maintains some sort of
 - D. accounts for incidents within Zakouma Park only, wherein the Parks Department maintains some
8. Assuming that all of the following are accurate, which one provides information about the dispersal area while maintaining the tone of the passage?
 - A. that appears to be lots larger than the park itself.
 - B. about the same shape as the park but four times the size.
 - C. with lots of room for other elephants and different kinds of animals.
 - D. that is about four times the size of the park itself.
9.
 - A. zones, but it is more difficult to monitor than
 - B. zones. But it is more difficult to monitor then
 - C. zones; but it is most difficult to monitor then
 - D. zones: but it is more difficult to monitor than
10.
 - A. two game wardens were shot, and killed by poachers
 - B. the fatal shooting and killing of two game wardens by poachers
 - C. poachers used guns to kill two game wardens
 - D. poachers shot and killed two game wardens
11.
 - A. it's military presence
 - B. its military presence
 - C. its militarys' presence
 - D. it's military, present

park director, has had a somewhat dissuasive effect this past month.

The U.S. embassy anticipates holding a training exercise for park rangers in March or April of this year and ¹²will soon be transferring two vehicles to the park. The embassy has also sought funding from the Department of Interior's African Elephant Conservation Fund in an effort to ¹³help to conserve Chad's elephant population. ¹⁴In addition, the embassy is discussing with the U.S. Forest and Wildlife Service the possibility ¹⁵that an official would be in Chad for a specific purpose. [16]

12. A. will soon be transferring
B. would soon be transferring
C. soon would have transferred
D. soon transferred
13. A. help to conserve
B. conserve
C. conserve and maintain
D. ensure the conservation and safety of
14. A. In addition,
B. At this place in time,
C. When all is said and done,
D. As you will come to know,
15. Given that all of the following choices are true, which one would provide the clearest and most relevant information to the paragraph?
 - A. that an official would be in Chad for a specific purpose.
 - B. that someone would be sent to Chad with the purpose being to assess the particulars of the situation.
 - C. of its sending an official to Chad to assess the situation.
 - D. of an official visit to Chad, sent by them for the sole purpose of the assessment.
16. Which of the following sentences best summarizes the last paragraph?
 - A. The U.S. embassy in Chad has an excess number of vehicles.
 - B. The U.S. has an interest in the fate of Chad's elephant population.
 - C. The U.S. Department of Interior has expanded its sphere into international arenas.
 - D. Chad has an insurmountable elephant problem.

Questions 17-25: In the following sentences, certain words and phrases are underlined and numbered. Each sentence is followed by alternatives for each underlined part. Choose the alternative that best expresses the idea in standard written English. If you think the original version is best, choose option **A.**, which is the same as the original version.

The Office of Ecology and Terrestrial Conservation leads the formulation of policies to address international threats to biodiversity, ¹⁷notably land degradation, invasive species, and illegal trade.

17. **A.** notably
B. notable
C. more notably
D. more notable

There is a controversy over a series of apparent incursions across a border line ¹⁸drawn in 1923.

18. **A.** drawn
B. which is drawn
C. where it was drawn
D. drawing

Last Sunday's parliamentary election ¹⁹delivery of a stinging setback to the governing Liberal Party.

19. **A.** delivery of a
B. was delivered by a
C. delivered a
D. deliverance of that

A large segment of Lapatria's officer corps ²⁰have been receiving U.S. training.

20. **A.** have been receiving
B. have received
C. are receiving
D. has received

The ambassador and ²¹myself were in attendance at the ceremony.

21. **A.** myself were in attendance at
B. I attended
C. me were in attendance at
D. myself attended

If we ²²had had the map, we might ²³of went further inland.

22. **A.** had had
B. have had
C. had
D. have
23. **A.** of went
B. have went
C. of gone
D. have gone

Sustainable development involves enriching our people without impoverishing our planet and is a compelling moral and humanitarian issue. But sustainable development is also a security imperative. [24]

24. Which of the following sentences, inserted here, would best explain how sustainable development relates to security?

- A.** When we talk of sustainable development, we are talking about the means to unlock human potential through economic development based on sound economic policy.
B. Achieving sustainable management of natural resources worldwide requires the cooperation and commitment of all countries.
C. The best social development is based on investments in health and education and responsible stewardship of the environment.
D. Environmental degradation coupled with poverty and despair causes social instability that can spread from individual countries to entire regions.

The Inter-American Convention Against Corruption covers corrupt practices on both the national and international ²⁵level, furthermore, it commits nations to bringing domestic law into compliance with the convention.

25. **A.** level,
B. level
C. level;
D. level—

3. Sample Written Essay Topics

You will have 30 minutes to write an essay on an assigned topic. Sample topics are provided below.

When composing your essay, you should present your point of view clearly and support it. Your writing will be evaluated on the quality of the writing, not the opinions expressed. A successful essay should have an obvious structure and clear thesis supported by relevant substantiating details. It should show your ability to analyze a topic in a way that is appropriate for the intended audience. The writing should be coherent with only occasional lapses that do not impede flow or readers' comprehension. Language should be concise with clear and appropriate word choice. The language should also be free of errors in grammar and syntax, with no more than minor errors in spelling and punctuation. There is no limit on length.

1. Although rates for violent crime have fallen in the last few years, as a society we must continue to be concerned about existing crime rates and how to prevent violent crimes from occurring. Some argue that the most effective means of preventing crime is to expand police forces, particularly in large urban areas, and put more police officers on the street. Others argue that more effective gun control laws are needed to reduce the number and kinds of guns available to criminals. Still others argue that imposing stiffer legal penalties and keeping criminals in jail longer are the best means of preventing violent crime. In your view, what is the most effective public policy for preventing violent crime? Carefully explain the rationale for your position.
2. In recent years, there have been a number of mergers between firms in entertainment, communications, publishing, banking, automobile manufacturing, and other industries. Some people think that mergers result in lower operating costs, greater efficiency, and increased productivity for businesses. Others think such mergers are beneficial because they result in enhanced services and lower costs for consumers. However, some argue that mergers are not beneficial for society because they often result in loss of jobs and may reduce people's access to goods and information. In your view, are mergers beneficial? Carefully explain the rationale for your position.

SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS ANSWER

Job Knowledge Test		English Expression Test		
1. A	11. D	1. C	11. B	21. B
2. B	12. B	2. D	12. A	22. A
3. A	13. C	3. A	13. B	23. D
4. A	14. A	4. A	14. A	24. D
5. B	15. B	5. D	15. C	25. C
6. A	16. C	6. C	16. B	
7. C	17. D	7. B	17. A	
8. C	18. C	8. D	18. A	
9. C	19. B	9. A	19. C	
10. D	20. B	10. D	20. D	

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What can I do to prepare to take the Foreign Service Officer Test and Oral Assessment?**

Over time, a thorough daily reading of major news publications will help develop the kind of general knowledge in world and national affairs that is necessary to do well. An officially sanctioned study guide is also available and can be ordered or downloaded at careers.state.gov. Sample questions are also provided in this registration guide.

- **What should I study in college?**

No specific educational background is required to become a Foreign Service Officer. However, most successful officers have a broad knowledge of international and domestic affairs, U.S. and world history, government and foreign policy, and American culture. The best preparation is a good education, including courses in English, management, history, government, international relations, geography, literature, economics, business, public administration, U.S. politics, political science, language, social sciences and international trade.

- **What experience is desirable?**

The Foreign Service is looking to attract individuals with relevant experience. This could include work in teaching, law, public service administration, local and state government, and military service. However, successful candidates come from a variety of professional backgrounds.

- **Why can't I take the Foreign Service Officer Test if I'm past my 59th birthday?**

To join the Foreign Service you must have entered a Junior Officer class (A-100) before your 60th birthday. The process between the FSOT and entering a class is a lengthy one: Candidates take the oral assessment approximately two to three months after the FSOT. After passing the oral assessment, the candidate's clearances can take considerable time, and then the cleared candidate has to wait until his or her name is reached on the Register for an invitation to enter an A-100 class. Although we try diligently to move the process as quickly as possible, it would be unrealistic to allow less than eight months for successful completion of all these steps.

- **Can I be assigned to the country of my choice?**

All Foreign Service Officers must be worldwide available (i.e., willing to serve anywhere the State Department determines is necessary). Officers are transferred routinely according to the needs of the Service.

- **Is there a policy in regard to applicants who have dual citizenship?**

The Department of State has not implemented, and does not intend to implement, any "blanket rule" regarding dual citizenship. In making security clearance determinations, Diplomatic Security (DS) will continue to evaluate dual citizenship issues on a case-by-case basis. Potential candidates will be questioned about dual citizenship as part of their interview. Those who have any serious issues which could prevent them from receiving their clearance should give some thought to the likelihood of their being found ineligible before starting

this process.

- **Will my family get to travel overseas with me?**

Medically cleared spouses, children under 21, and dependent parents may accompany an FSO at government expense. However, security concerns and the lack of adequate educational or health facilities at some posts may dictate against the family accompanying the officer to some posts.

- **What is included in the benefits package for the Foreign Service?**

Benefits include a health plan and a retirement plan, as well as annual and sick leave.

FSO salaries may be enhanced when officers are assigned overseas by such benefits as government-provided housing, furniture, and utilities at post, home leave (including travel expenses), the shipment of automobiles to overseas posts, and hospitalization benefits.

In addition, educational allowances and travel for dependent children, cost-of-living allowances to help cover extra expenses in high-cost foreign cities, language incentive pay and special pay for danger and hardship posts are available when appropriate.

- **Are provisions made for spousal employment?**

Foreign Service families, like American families everywhere, are often two-income families. The Department of State has tandem couples in the Foreign Service where both spouses are employees of the Foreign Service, as well as tandems with sister agencies such as the Foreign Commercial Service or the Foreign Agricultural Service. When overseas, some non-tandem family

members find work at the embassy or consulate, while others find employment on the economy of the host country. In addition, family members may be eligible to teach at international or American schools abroad, or work as freelancers.

For information on Department of State Foreign Service Specialist and Civil Service careers, please visit our website, careers.state.gov or write:
U.S. Department of State
Recruitment Division
2401 E Street, N.W., 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20522

Preparing for the Foreign Service Officer Test

Preparation for taking the Foreign Service Officer Test requires the candidate to be widely read or to have taken a wide variety of courses prior to taking the test. The job analysis of Foreign Service Officer positions identified the following general knowledge areas as critical to success on the job across all five career tracks (Consular, Economic, Management, Political and Public Diplomacy):

Communication. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of principles of effective communication and public speaking techniques, as well as general knowledge of the common sources of information, public media and media relations.

Computers. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic computer operations such as word processing, databases, spreadsheets, and preparing and using e-mail.

Correct grammar, organization, writing strategy, sentence structure, and punctuation required for writing or editing reports. This knowledge area encompasses English expression and language usage skills required for preparing or editing written reports, including correct grammar and good writing.

Economics. This knowledge area encompasses an understanding of basic economic principles, as well as a general understanding of economic issues and the economic system of the United States.

Management. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic management and supervisory techniques, and methods. Includes knowledge of human psychology, leadership, motivational strategies and equal employment practices.

Mathematics and Statistics. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of basic mathematical and statistical procedures. May include calculations.

United States Government. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of the composition and functioning of the Federal government, the Constitution and its history, the structure of Congress and its role in foreign affairs, as well as the United States political system and its role in governmental structure, formulation of government policies, and foreign affairs.

United States Society and Culture. This knowledge area encompasses an understanding of major events, institutions, and movements in national history, including political and economic history, as well as national customs and culture, social issues and trends, and the influence of U.S. society and culture on foreign policy and foreign affairs.

World History and Geography. This knowledge area encompasses a general understanding of significant world historical events, issues, and developments, including their impact on U.S. foreign policy, as well as knowledge of world geography and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy.